INVENTA

JACQUET OF MANTUA

Motets & Secular Songs

THE CHOIR OF SIDNEY SUSSEX COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

Kirsty Whatley harp David Skinner director

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Jacquet of Mantua (1485–1559)

1. **Ave maris stella a4/5**	[8:29]
Plorabant sacerdotes a5	
2. Plorabant sacerdotes (prima pars)	[4:27]
3. Parce domine (secunda pars)	[4:28]
4. **In lectulo meo a3**	[3:03]
5. **Nigra sum sed formosa a5**	[6:36]
6. **Cantate Domino a 3**	[2:20]
7. **Ave regina caelorum a6**	[6:16]
Three Secular Songs	
8. Vostre dolce parole a4	[1:49]
9. Canamus et bibamus a4	[3:06]
10. Douce ésperance a4	[2:15]
Pater noster a5	
11. Pater noster (prima pars)	[7:21]
12. Ave Maria (secunda pars)	[6:14]
13. **Quam pulchra es**	[3:00]
14. **Virgo prudentissima a4**	[3:59]
15. **Da pacem Domine a7**	[4:20]
16. **Aspice Domine a5**	[6:56]
17. **Sancta Trinitas a8**	[5:32]
Total playing time	[80:18]

Jacquet of Mantua: Motets & Secular Songs

Born in Vitré in 1485, Jacquet of Mantua embarked on a journey like many French and Flemish composers of the early sixteenth century, seeking the prestige and opportunities that Italy had to offer. As one of the leading composers of sacred polyphony between the great Josquin Desprez (d. 1521) and Palestrina (d. 1594), Jacquet was based in Italy at least by 1519, first as a singer to the house of Rangoni in Modena, supported variously by the powerful Este dynasty, and then by 1526 to Mantua under the patronage of Ercole Cardinal Gonzaga, Bishop of Mantua. He died there in 1559.

A prolific composer, Jacquet produced some twenty-five Mass settings and well over 100 motets and ritual music, many of which remain to be published. The large majority of his motets are for four, five, and occasionally six voices. He seems rarely to have ventured into larger-scale works, the grandest being **Da pacem, Domine** for seven voices and **Sancta Trinitas** for eight. Owing to his patron Ganzaga's zeal for the Counter-Reformation (he was president of the Council of Trent), Jacquet specialised universally in sacred music almost to the exclusion of the secular. Only three songs survive by him, and all are recorded here: two love songs, one in French (**Douce ésperance**) and the other in Italian (**Vostre dolce parole**), along with a lively and spirited drinking song in Latin (**Canamus et bibamus**) which features 'burps' as punctuation. Despite the exceptional quality of his work, there are very few albums dedicated to his music.

Jacquet, a disciple of Josquin, was also a student of the great composer. One of his best-known and often-recorded works is *Dum vastos Adriae fluctus* (not recorded here) in which the orator recounts the joys of his Master, Josquin, and the music paraphrases five of Josquin's most popular works of the time: *Praeter serum seriem*, *Stabat mater*, *Inviolata*, *Salve regina* and *Miserere mei*. Jacquet extends his homage to Josquin in one of his many hymn settings **Ave maris stella**, the opening track, which again paraphrases the ever-popular *Praeter serum serium* opening theme in the first polyphonic verse. His general style reflects a blend of both the Franco-Flemish tradition and the emerging Italian style. This fusion is evident in his consistent use of dissonance and resolution, rhythmic vitality when appropriate, and melodic grace. He often employs imitation, where musical phrases or even short motifs are echoed in other parts. The underlying structure displays complex polyphony, rarely simplifying to fewer voices, while striving to create rich harmonic textures filled with instances of false relations and double suspensions. This approach is reminiscent of certain mid-sixteenth-century works by

Thomas Tallis and, notably, John Sheppard, raising the question of whether Jacquet may have drawn influence from contemporary English composers at some point in his career.

Interestingly, we transition here from Mantua to Oxford, where John Sheppard served as Informator Choristarum at Magdalen College from 1540 to 1548, except for a brief hiatus between 1541 and 1543, during which time another composer, Thomas Preston, filled the role. A list of Magdalen's Informatores is displayed on the staircase leading to the organ loft, offering a largely complete record from the sixteenth century and beyond that includes several notable composers, such as Richard Davy, John Mason, and Thomas Appleby. Among these names, one stands out as somewhat unusual: a 'Master Jacquet'—notably of French origin, whose name appears in the college accounts variously as Jacqwett or the anglicized "Jackett"—served as Informator from 1536 to 1539. While foreign composers and musicians were prevalent in English courtly circles, it is unusual—if not unprecedented—to find one leading a collegiate choir in Oxford or anywhere else in England. Some have described the presence of a 'Jacquet' at Magdalen as 'mysterious' and an 'intriguing coincidence.' While any potential connection should be approached with caution, arguments can be made to support this idea.

One of the most significant collections of Latin sacred music from the early 1540s is the Peterhouse Partbooks, which comprise four of the original five books belonging to Peterhouse College, Cambridge (MSS 471-74). Nick Sandon has long argued that this collection was compiled from music at Magdalen College, Oxford, and was prepared for the New Foundation of Christ Church, Canterbury, which took place in 1541. The books contain seventy-two works by twenty-four English composers, along with two additional compositions by foreign composers incorporated seamlessly into the collection. Here is found a *Missa Surrexit pastor bonus* by 'Lupus Italius' and an anonymous setting of **Aspice Domine**, which is by none other than Jacquet of Mantua. **Aspice Domine** was the most widely circulated and best known of Jacquet's works, surviving in over forty manuscript and printed sources, including this single English source. It is also thematically linked to the seven-part **Da pacem, Domine** which shares the same E natural / E flat modal twists at the text 'nisi tu Deus noster', which appear in both motets.

Could the Master Jacquet at Magdalen College be the same person as the Mantuan composer? During Master Jacquet's years in Oxford (1536–1539), the Mantuan composer had already received citizenship in Mantua in 1534 and served as titular maestro di cappella at Mantua Cathedral until his death in 1559. His unique position meant he reported solely to his patron, Cardinal Gonzaga, who was known to interact with English musicians and scholars during various diplomatic missions to England. While this raises the possibility that the Mantuan Jacquet could have spent three years abroad, evidence remains limited, with only references to a Jacquet in the Magdalen accounts and the quite unusual appearance of his *Aspice Domine* in a potential Magdalen source (which otherwise features English composers apart from the lone Mass setting by 'Lupus'). Regardless of any possible English connection, Jacquet of Mantua's prolific output is undeniably sensuous and remarkable, offering a wealth of material to be explored and appreciated.

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Texts & Translations

1. **Ave maris stella**
Dei Mater alma,
Atque semper Virgo,
Felix caeli porta.

Hail, star of the sea,
loving Mother of God,
and also always a virgin,
Happy gate of heaven.

Sumens illud Ave
Gabrielis ore,
Funda nos in pace,
Mutans Evae nomen.

Receiving that Ave
from Gabriel's mouth
confirm us in peace,
Reversing Eva's name.

Solve vincla reis,
Profer lumen caecis,
Mala nostra pelle,
Bona cuncta posce.

Break the chains of sinners,
Bring light to the blind,
Drive away our evils,
Ask for all good.

Monstra te esse matrem
Sumat per te preces,
Qui pro nobis natus
Tulit esse tuus.

Show yourself to be a mother,
May he accept prayers through you,
he who, born for us,
Chose to be yours.

Virgo singularis,
Inter omnes mitis,
Nos culpis solutos,
Mites fac et castos.

O unique virgin,
Meek above all,
Make us, absolved from sin,
Gentle and chaste.

Vitam praesta puram,
Iter para tutum,
Ut videntes Jesum,
Semper collaetemur.

Keep life pure,
Make the journey safe,
So that, seeing Jesus,
We may always rejoice together.

Sit laus Deo Patri,
Summo Christo decus
Spiritui Sancto,
Tribus honor unus. Amen.

Let there be praise to God the Father,
Glory to Christ in the highest,
To the Holy Spirit,
One honor to all three. Amen.

Plorabant sacerdotes
2. Plorabant sacerdotes (prima pars)
Plorabant sacerdotes et levite ministri domini insta vestibulum et altare, dicentes:

The priests and ministers of the Lord wept near the vestibule to the altar, saying:

3. Parce domine (secunda pars)
Parce domine populo tuo et ne discipes hora canentium ad te domine.

Spare me, Lord, spare thy people, and do not scatter the lips of those that sing to thee, O Lord.

5. **Nigra sum sed formosa**
Nigra sum sed formosa filia ideo dilexit diligit et diliget me dominus meus, desiderio vocabat dominus meus amica. O quam pulcra es amica mea, dilecta mea formosa filia. Accede in sinu idoli tui et tandem introduxit me in cubiculum suum.

I am a black but beautiful daughter, therefore my Lord loved me, loves me, and will love me. In desire my Lord called [me] his love. 'O how beautiful you are, my love, my beloved beautiful daughter, come into the arms of your idol'. At length he brought me into his chamber.

7. **Ave regina caelorum**
Ave regina caelorum, mater regis angelorum:
O Maria flos virginum velut rosa vel lilium
Funde preces ad filium pro salute fidelium.

Hail, queen of heaven, mother of the king of angels:
O Mary, flower of virgins like a rose or lily
Pour out prayers to the Son for the salvation of the faithful.

Three Secular Songs
8. Vostre dolce parole,
E la belta che in voi con gratia tale
Vi fan vita per sempre et io mortale,
Che essendo voi mio sole,
Voi il mio ben, e la mia morte e vita,
E non havendo ardire chiederui aita
Son certo poter dire,
Se io non son morto gia posso io morire.

Your sweet words and your beauty,
which with such grace
make you immortal and me mortal;
You being my sun, my love,
and my death and my life;
And not having the courage to ask you for help
I'm sure I can say:
If I'm not dead already, let me die.

9. Canamus et bibamus

Canamus et bibamus quo melius dormiamus
bibite cantores, trich trich, io io,
iterum bibamus ergo, io, io, io!
Implete pocula usque ad summum
et totum bibite vinum, io, io, io,
bibamus ergo, trich trich, io, io, io!
Bridz!
Io, cantores bibamus et rebibamus
quo melius dormiamus.
Bibamus ergo, trich trich, io io.

Let us sing and drink that we might sleep better.
Drink, singers, trich, trich, io, io,
Let us drink again therefore, io, io, io!
Fill your cups up to the top
And drink all the wine, io, io, io,
Hurrah, let us drink therefore, trich, trich, io, io!
[Belch]
Hurrah, singers, let us drink and drink again
That we might sleep better.
Let us drink therefore, trich, trich, io, io.

10. Douce ésperance

Douce espérance éveillez votre coeur
car votre époux vous crie, alarme!
De votre corps prétend être seigneur
Et tout avoir, fors que de vous l'âme.
Alarme! Armez vous madame,
voici l'assaut qui bataille dénonce
et de vous vaincre sur toute chose aimée
Gardez vous bien que votre escu n'enfonce.
Alarme!

Sweet hope awaken your heart
because your husband cries to you. Alarme!
Your body is claimed by your master
and all of it, except for your soul.
Alarme! Arm yourself madam:
here comes the assault that battle denounces
and conquers you above all love:
take care that your shield does not buckle.
Alarme!

Pater noster

11. Pater noster (prima pars)

Pater noster, qui es in caelis, sanctificetur nomen tuum; adveniat regnum tuum. Fiat voluntas tua sicut in caelo et in terra. Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie, et dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris. Et ne nos inducas in tentationem; sed libera nos a malo.

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

12. Ave Maria (secunda pars)

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum; benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus. Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus, nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

14. **Virgo prudentissima**

Virgo prudentissima, quo progrederis, quasi aurora valde rutilans?
Filia Sion, tota formosa et suavis es: pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol.

Virgin most wise where are you going, shining out as brightly as the dawn?
Daughter of Sion, you are most comely and merciful, beautiful as the moon, excellent as the sun.

15. **Da pacem Domine**

Da pacem, Domine, in diebus nostris quia non est alius qui pugnet pro nobis nisi tu Deus noster.

Give peace in our time, O Lord, because there is none other who fights for us but thee our God.

16. **Aspice Domine**

Aspice, Domine, quia facta est desolata civitas plena divitiis. Sedet in tristitia, domina gentium. Non est qui consoletur eam, nisi tu, Deus noster.

Behold, O Lord, how the city full of riches is become desolate. She sits in mourning, the mistress of the nations. There is none to comfort her save only thou, our God.

17. **Sancta Trinitas**

Sancta Trinitas unus Deus, miserere nobis.
Te invocamus. Te adoramus. Te laudamus.
Te glorificamus.
O beata Trinitas. Sit nomen Domini benedictus ex hoc nunc et usque in saeculum.

Holy Trinity, one God, have mercy upon us.
We call upon thee. We adore thee. We praise thee.
We glorify thee.
O holy Trinity. Blessed be the name of the Lord from henceforth, now and forever.

The Choir of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge

Sidney Sussex College rose from the ruins of the Cambridge Greyfriars in 1596 and has long been a nest for professional musicians. Indeed, the large chapel that stood on this site in pre-Reformation times was the regular venue for University ceremonies and was where a number of early English composers are likely to have taken their degrees, including Robert Fayrfax (MusB, 1501; DMus 1504) and Christopher Tye (MusB, 1536). Later, the great Elizabethan composer William Byrd would have been well-known to the foundress, Lady Frances Sidney, and two very fine elegies by Byrd survive for her nephew, the poet and courtier Sir Philip Sidney. It is thought that a dedicated chapel choir must have existed in some form since the foundation of the College on St Valentine's Day 1596. Since the admission of women to the college in 1976, the Choir of Sidney Sussex has blossomed into one of the most esteemed choral groups in Oxbridge. In 2009 Eric Whitacre was appointed as Sidney Sussex's first Composer in Residence; in 2015, that mantle was assumed by British composer and Choir alumna Joanna Marsh, and more recently, in 2022, by Nico Muhly.

Sidney Choir has also made a niche for itself as specialists in Renaissance music, with recordings of Thomas Tomkins (*Gramophone* CD of the Month) Ludwig Senfl, William Croft and Thomas Weelkes (*Gramophone* Award Nominee). The Choir also tours extensively, and most recently in Malaysia, Singapore, Italy, Spain, Dubai and the USA.

Soprano
Ingrid Berdal
Grace Dixon
Annabel Dunstan
Doraly Gill
Madeleine Kelly
Sophie Madden
Anna Webb

Alto
Lucy Hillman
Arya Kalavath
Anna Morgan
Beth Norman

Tenor
Angus Champion
James Gant
Hector King
Patrick Humphreys
Nicolas Walters
Rhys Williams

Baritone
Francis Fowler
Luke Nicholas
Alexander Semple
Leon Sturdee

Bass
George Bowyer
Luca Myers
Felix O'Rahilly
Aidan Quinlan

Kirsty Whatley, harp

David Skinner, director

David Skinner (director)

David Skinner is Fellow and Osborn Director of Music at Sidney Sussex College in the University of Cambridge where he teaches historical and practical topics from the medieval and renaissance periods. He directs the Choir of Sidney Sussex College, with whom he has toured and made highly acclaimed recordings, and is frequently invited to lecture, lead workshops and coach choirs throughout Europe and the USA. He also directs the multi award-winning early music ensemble Alamire. David divides his time equally as a scholar and choral director. An engaging presenter he has worked extensively for BBC radio, appearing in and writing a variety of shows on Radio 3 and 4. He acted as music advisor for the *Music and Monarchy* series on BBC 2 with David Starkey, and was Music Consultant for the BBC4 documentary Evensong with Lucy Worsley. He has published widely on music and musicians of early Tudor England, and his latest publications include an historical introduction for a facsimile publication of Royal College of Music, MS 1070 — *The Anne Boleyn Music Book* — as well as the first volume of a new collected edition devoted to the Latin church music of Thomas Tallis for Early English Church Music (Stainer & Bell).

Kirsty Whatley (harp)

Kirsty Whatley studied modern harp in Manchester and historical harp in Basel, Switzerland. She has worked as a performer, recording artist and teacher for many years, both in the UK and overseas, including with: The BBC Singers, Alamire, The Taverner Consort, Musica Secreta, I Fagiolini, Fretwork, London Handel Orchestra, Moscow City Ballet; and on the continent with Ensemble Leones, Le Miroir de Musique and Tetraktys. She lives in Northern Scotland.

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